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# **Supporting and Empowering Underrepresented Students in Persisting Through College**



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## **Poll #1**

**What percentage of U.S. students who started college in 2012 graduated with any degree within 6 years?**

# National Graduation Statistics

**Stat:** In 2018, just **58%** of U.S. students (regardless of race or income quartile) who started any college in the fall of 2012 had earned any degree six years later, according to the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#). These numbers are much lower for certain subgroups of students.

For all **Hispanic** students who started college in **2012**, **49** percent earned a degree in **six years**.

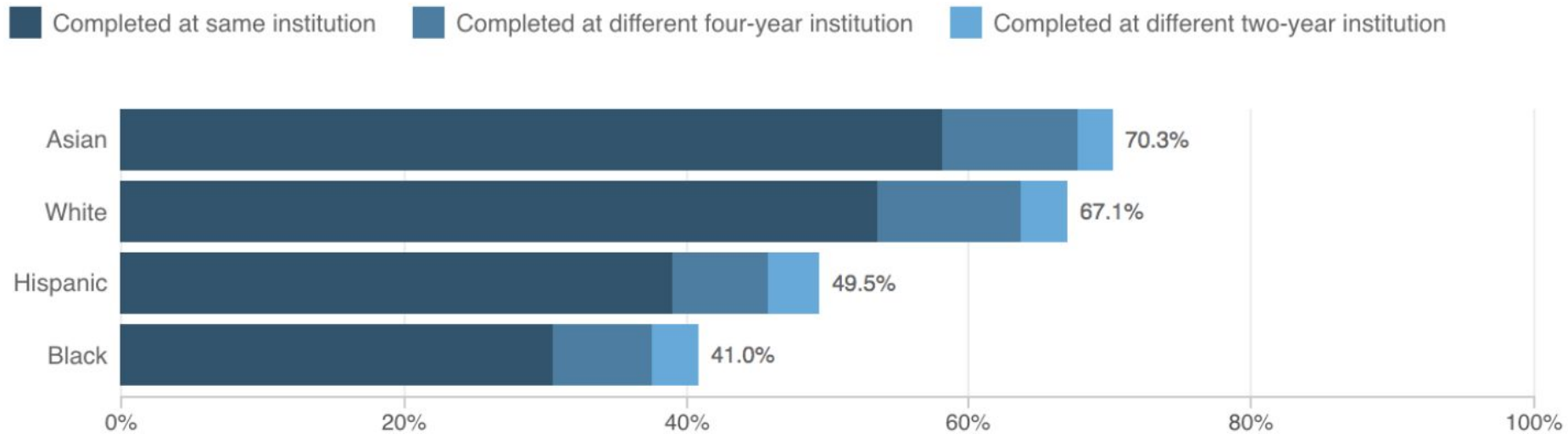
*Note: NSC measures 6-year completion of 4-year college, and 3-year completion of 2-year colleges - 150% of time to degree*

# National Graduation Statistics by Race/Ethnicity

National 6-year graduation rates for those who STARTED college in 2012

## College Completion Outcomes By Race And Ethnicity

Six-year completion rates for first-time, degree-seeking students who began their postsecondary studies in the fall of 2012.



Source: [National Student Clearinghouse](#)

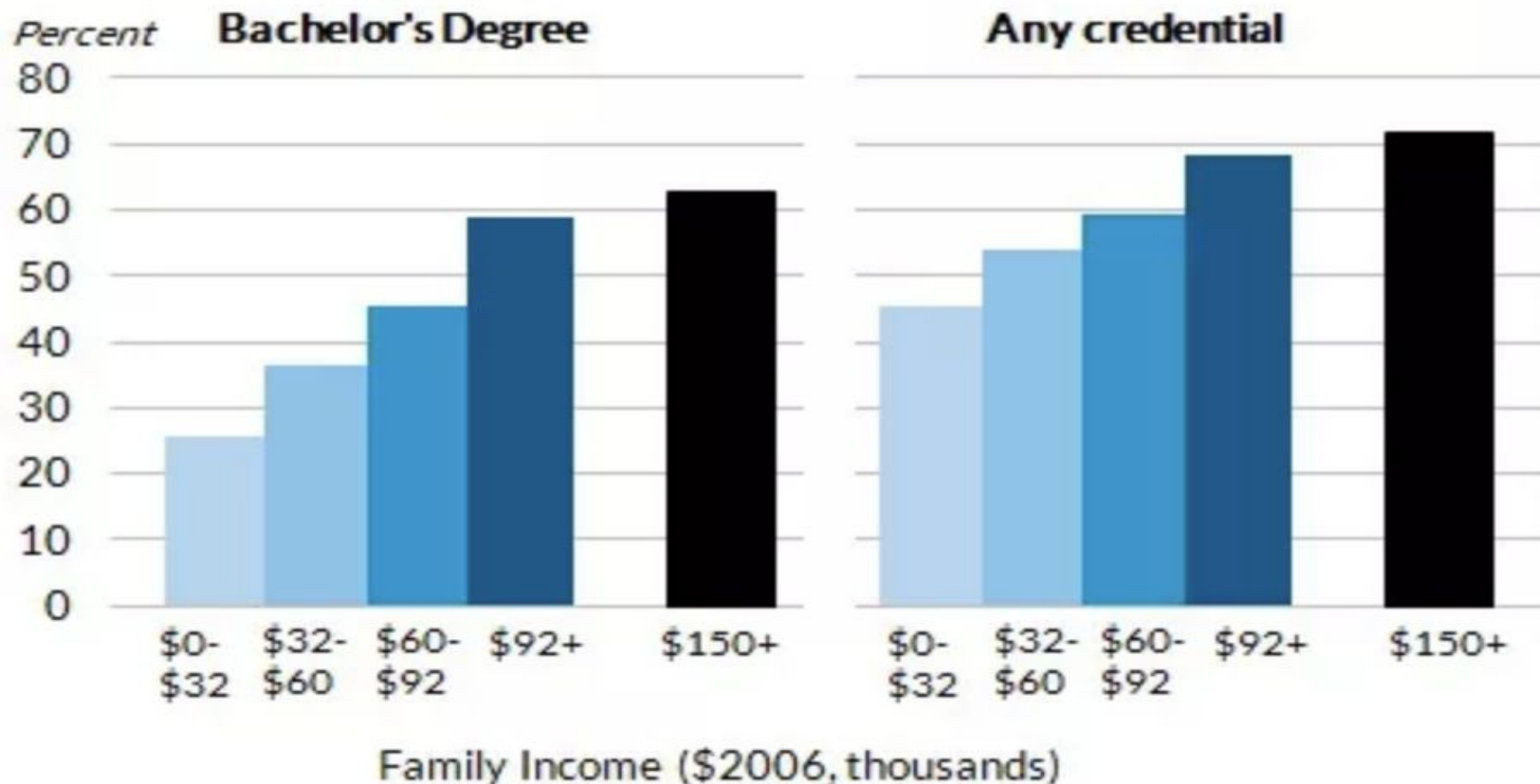
Credit: Koko Nakajima/NPR

## **Poll #2**

**What percentage of U.S. students who started college in 2012 and came from the lowest income bracket graduated with a bachelor's degree within 6 years?**

# National Graduation Statistics By Household Income

## Higher education graduation rates by income



Source: Department of Education

URBAN INSTITUTE



- The growth of Latinx students in higher education calls for an evaluation of the challenges that Latinx students experience, particularly at Historically White Institutions (HWI's) .
- Educators need to evaluate the way that they serve Latinx students to better serve them.
- Understanding their needs can assist with program development that helps to increase college completion rates.
- Today, you will be provided with information that can help you enhance student success as we identify the challenges that affect Latinx students.



# Why is this important?

- Latinx are the largest and fastest growing non-White U.S. racial/ethnic population, but their college attainment rates remain one of the lowest of all groups (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004).
- The Latinx population in the United States is expected to increase by 25% by 2030 (Excelencia, 2020).
- First-generation Latinx College students face a unique set of challenges.
- Many Latinx students are being admitted to HWI's but too few are graduating.



# Latinx Students in Higher Education

- Verdugo (2006) states that factors that have been attributed to the low graduation rate of Latinos include:
  - Lack of cultural understanding
  - Inadequate academic advising
  - Non-supportive school climate
- A study conducted by Smedley, Myers, and Harrell's (1993), reported that Latinx students on Historically White Institutions face specific stresses associated with:
  - Their minority status
  - Psychological sensitivity to the campus social climate (*including interpersonal tensions with White students/faculty and perceived experiences of racism and discrimination*).



# Obstacles

## COMMON THEMES FOR STUDENTS Who are the first in their family:

HIGHER NEED OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

MAY BE CHALLENGED BY LACK OF “COLLEGE READINESS”

CHALLENGES BALANCING COLLEGE WITH WORK AND FAMILY

EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES WITH SELF-MOTIVATION

NEED ASSISTANCE AND ENGAGEMENT FROM INSTRUCTORS, COUNSELORS AND TUTORS

## Added Obstacles for LATINX STUDENTS

FAMILIES MAY EXPERIENCE LANGUAGE BARRIERS

FEAR OF NOT BEING ABLE TO BE SUCCESSFUL

MAY NEED ASSISTANCE ACCESSING AND LEARNING HOW TO “DO COLLEGE”.

NEED A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

STRUGGLE WITH INTERSECTING IDENTITIES (*WHERE DO I FIT IN?*)

*MAY EXPERIENCE IMPOSTER SYNDROME*

# Imposter Syndrome

*“...refers to people who have a persistent belief in their lack of intelligence, skills, or competence. They are convinced that other people’s praise and recognition of their accomplishments is undeserved, chalking up their achievements to chance, charm, connections, and other external factors. Unable to internalize or feel deserving of their success, they continually doubt their ability to repeat past successes. When they do succeed, they feel relief rather than joy” (Young 2011, p. 16)*

- People in non-dominant groups (not white, affluent, men) or underrepresented groups are more likely to question their success and feel like they don’t belong in high achievement settings.
- These feelings are powerful in and of themselves, but they can also result in behavior that undermines achievement and limits opportunities.
- Imposter Syndrome isn’t about the individual, but rather the systems of oppression that they navigate.

# Strategies for Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

- Acknowledge these feelings and normalize – it is not just me
- Share your stories; be vulnerable to truly connect
- Counter assumptions with data – was it just good timing?
- Keep a list of your accomplishments; re-read letters of recommendation and performance reviews
- Practice gratitude for good fortune and dumb luck
- Celebrate successes and practice saying, “thank you”
- Question where these feelings come from...

# Challenging the Deficit Model

Too often marginalized populations are approached with a deficit perspective.

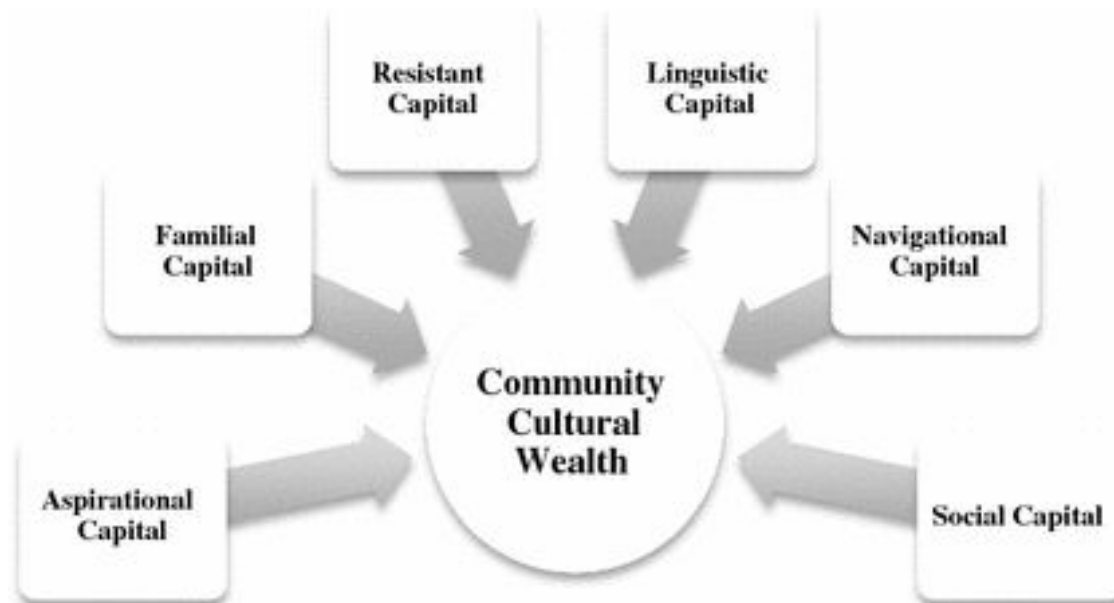
**The deficit model of education sees youth as:**

- *lacking in some way*
- *defective*
- *deficient*
- *needing to be “fixed”*
- *not as good as . . .*
- *needing to develop skills valued by mainstream society*



# Challenging the Deficit Model: Community of Cultural Wealth

- Yosso (2005) *Community Cultural Wealth*
- Communities of color have wealth of capital
- Shift from deficit model
- Challenge the values placed on dominant perceptions of cultural capital

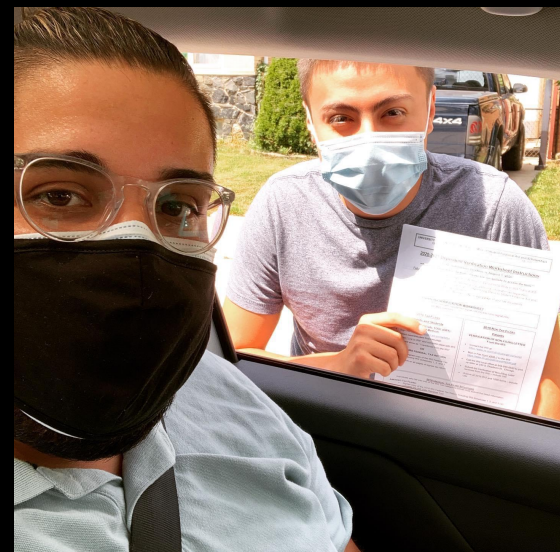


# Cultural Wealth

- **Aspirational** - ability to maintain hope and dreams in the face of perceived barriers
- **Familial** - the social and personal resources students have in their pre-college environment, typically family members and community networks
- **Linguistic Capital** - The various language and communication skills students bring with them into their college environment
  - Many students serve as interpreter for family members
  - University oftentimes constricts what is deemed as proper speech, which harms students
- **Social Capital** - form of capital that Yosso defines as students' "peers and other social contacts" and emphasizes how students utilize these contacts to gain access to college and navigate other social institutions.
- **Resistant Capital** - sources of this form of capital come from parents, community members and an historical legacy of engaging in social justice.
- **Navigational Capital** - refers to students' skills and abilities to navigate "social institutions," including educational spaces.



# Testimonios of Our Work



# Things you can do to empower and support students

- Hire bilingual/bicultural and culturally competent professionals
  - (Ex: financial aid, bursar, scholarship, admissions, advisors)
- Support and create ethnic studies programs/initiatives
- Create a list of resources or support for Latinx students
- Funding for Cultural Centers
- Increase Latinx faculty
- Honor students cultural wealth
- Support students affected by immigration status
- Creating a Faculty Toolkit of how to support Latinx Students
- Encourage inclusive language in syllabus (Use Scholars that look like them)
- Create an Ally Trainings to meet the needs of ALL students
- Include Latinx students in all initiatives surrounding their success.
- Support their events and initiatives (Be their “accomplice”)
- Learn the needs of your students
- Recognize your privilege and build allyship with students and others.
- Learn to recognize your own biases and challenge the narrative

# Questions To Consider

How do we recognize and help students draw on wisdom, values and stories from their home communities? How do we create environments that honor and invite families to participate?

How do we help students stay connected to the communities and individuals instrumental in their previous educational success? How do we engage with likely individuals and community-based organizations about admissions and selection processes and the types of supports successful students need?

How do we help students navigate our institutions? Interactions with teachers/faculty? Interactions with student-support staff? Their peers? How willing are we to acknowledge that our institutions, both their structures and cultures, have a history of, and may still in many ways be unsupportive and/or hostile to our students and their communities?

How do we support students who are committed to engaging in and serving their home communities (however they define these)? What opportunities do we provide students in and outside of the classroom to prepare them for participation in a diverse democracy?



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